

Building your Personal Brand to Boost your Career



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Personal brands should be important to everyone. Personal brands are not only for the entrepreneur that owns their own business. It is the secret sauce that can make you stand out of a stack of resumes. If you don't develop your own personal brand, others will do it for you. Developing your personal brand is the proactive way of controlling your career development and how you are perceived in the marketplace. A strong personal brand will impact your ability to get the right jobs, promotions, and increase your ability to attract talent and capital.¹

This document is designed to help Macquarie University staff members understand the purpose and importance of developing their own personal brand and how this can be achieved.

What is a personal brand?

A personal brand is the process of developing a "mark" that is created around your name or your career. You use this "mark" to express and communicate your skills, personality, and values

We all can be a brand and cultivate our power to stand out and be unique. This uniqueness draws people to our product, our services, or even just our message. Your personal brand should be about who you are and what you have to offer.¹

Tips for building a personal brand

1. **Say "yes" to relevant opportunities** – i.e. Actively seek out and volunteer for high profile roles and assignments where you can demonstrate your new brand in action.
2. **Seek out opportunities** to do presentations and chair meetings e.g. volunteer to share a project update at a team meeting, or present back to your team on a seminar or workshop you have attended.
3. **Ask at least one question** at every meeting you attend i.e. speak up during meetings. If you don't say anything or ask any questions in a meeting, others simply won't notice you, and you certainly won't be building a reputation for anything other than being 'the quiet one.' Don't talk for the sake of talking but find a way that works for you to verbally engage in staff meetings, workshops and /or events.
4. **Network** internally beyond your immediate team. People promote people they know, trust and who they see stretching beyond their immediate duties. Interacting with other teams and their leadership gives you a household name and creates opportunities for you to become a more well-rounded contributor to your business.
5. **Share you voice with influencers.** Make a point to proactively providing advice and support within your area of expertise. Join relevant online and offline communities and make connections.
6. **Stand by you word.** You are only as good as your word, and that is a 24x7 commitment. One of the best ways to build your brand is to do what you promise. It is always better to over-deliver than over-promise. Your brand and integrity precede you. While it takes a long time to build your brand, it can be destroyed very quickly when and if you break that trust. Be reliable and DO what you say.
7. **Build good relationships and foster good communication skills.** Good communication is the cornerstone of your brand. The way you interact and speak with others is core to how you are perceived.

Take care how you manage and respond to emails. If you are busy, let people know you will get back to them and always follow

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through. Consider how you sign off emails. You are creating an impression, pleasantries like “please,” “thank you,” and “have a great afternoon,” count. Take a few seconds before hitting send on emails and do a sanity check. If you are about to let off some steam, take a deep breath and park your emails in drafts. Imagine you are on the receiving end of your email.

A clear, understandable message, without typos, demonstrates that you are organised, professional and respectful; qualities everyone wants in their personal brand.

In person make good eye contact, stay focused and keep good posture. All suggest you are alert and interested.

8. **Share insights, not information.** What really adds value, is to convey why the information presented is important and how others can use it. Take the extra step to interpret data for your team and stakeholders so they come away with an “ah-ha” that helps them do a better job.
9. **Dress for success.** You can’t go wrong looking well-groomed. You don’t have to spend a lot of money to look good. It’s always better to dress up than dress down, if you want to get ahead, especially if you interface with clients. No one was ever accused of dressing “a little too professionally.”
10. **Be authentic.** Be genuine. If you are out to impress, it will show. Show kindness to others. Offer to help others when you can and take an extra second to pay it forward. ²
11. Develop a **digital footprint** (see section below)

Building a digital profile

In the digital age, the way you present yourself and the messages you send alongside yourself can have a huge impact on your career. Having an online presence is becoming increasingly

essential in a society that relies so heavily on the internet.

In today's digital age, you are your brand. Therefore, it's important to maintain your internet brand management and do so in the most effective way for your career. A key element of your personal and professional brand is your digital footprint, which can help you obtain employment, allow you to contribute significantly to your employer's operation, and advance your career.”⁵

Key factors to consider:

1. **Develop and optimise your LinkedIn profile.** If you don’t have a LinkedIn account, you need to open one. There are millions of people on LinkedIn all around the world and you will be missing out on a great opportunity to build your personal brand if you don’t have a presence on the site. LinkedIn profiles are the new CV’s and many people and organisations now use LinkedIn to search for new recruits and to look people up. It has become the new platform for recruitment. The more you use the site the quicker you will build an inline presence. The following online course can help you build and develop your LinkedIn profile [Learning LinkedIn](#) (Section 1, shows you step by step how to build your LinkedIn Profile).
2. **Set up your business Facebook page:** This is another platform that you can use – but don’t use your personal Facebook page, rather create a new business page that you can post to from your personal account – but keep them separate. Post all business-oriented links to this page and keep in mind that potential employers will see what is here.
3. **Twitter:** if you already have a twitter account, you may want to set up a business twitter account and keep your business brand separate. Use this account to follow thought leaders and other people in your industry you find interesting. Tweet links to current industry news or retweet relevant tweets to your followers. ⁴

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- 4. Have you own domain and website:** having your own website and domain puts you in the driver's seat and gives you leverage to communicate beyond restrictions of social media sites that come with their own structure and limitations. Running your own website highlights that you have really taken ownership of your own career.
- 5. Be consistent across platforms.** Online platforms all vary on demographics and purpose. Your combined online presence should be coherent and consistent. I.e. your CV, your LinkedIn profile and the way you present yourself personally must all work together. Showing up consistently and authentically will create trust and support for your work and increase your impact.
- 6. Google yourself and correct if necessary.** A good way to build a solid personal brand online is to check what's already out there. Google yourself and find out what pops up. If there are any concerning photos or news that you are connected to, then you can take action to correct. This is a great baseline for what you are putting out there. Always think before you post, you never know who is looking you up.
- 7. Be intentional about your content.** It is not enough to just post stuff. You must know what you are after, who you are looking for and what you want them to do. Know your strategy, be consistent and be realistic – i.e. only post content once a month but be consistent.
- 8. Get feedback from your peers.** Road test your personal branding information with trusted peers or colleagues.

The Bottom-line

Building a personal brand takes time and effort, but it's worth it. The need for a personal brand will continue to increase. It's the one thing that no one can take away from you, and it can follow you throughout your career. It's a leadership requirement that lets people know who you are and what you stand for. ¹

Further Information

To learn more, go to:

Bernard Marr posts – influencer, internationally best-selling author, key-note speaker and business advisor:

- [Career Choices You Will Regret in 20 Years](#)
- [The One Thing Successful People Never DO](#)
- [How NOT to Introduce Yourself](#)
- [Stop! Don't Look for a New Job Before Answering these 10 Questions](#)

LinkedIn:

- [How to promote your personal and professional brand using LinkedIn](#)

Lynda.com:

- [Creating your personal brand](#)
- [Learning Personal Branding](#)
- [Personal Branding on Social Media](#)
- [Personal Effectiveness Tips](#)
- [Guy Kawasaki on How to Rock Social Media](#)

For further information on development opportunities at Macquarie University, visit the [Development](#) pages on the staff intranet.

References

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3. Psychology today available at: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/tame-your-terrible-office-tyrant/201805/5-steps-building-your-personal-brand-work>, accessed 04 December 2018

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